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THE NEW YORK

LATIN LEAFLET

Entered at the Post Office in Brooklyn as second-class matter, October 29, 1908

25 Issues

Every Penny of
Every Subscription
goes into the
Scholarship Fund

VOL III

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, OCTOBER 20, 1902

No 53

TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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Phases of Latin Study: The Minimum and the Maximum of the High School Teacher's Equipment

To persons who are outside the pale of Latin, and to many who are within, the term 'Latin' has a very definite and restricted sense, and the expression 'teacher of Latin' carries with it the impression of a greater or less degree of scholarship in a certain limited field. To the majority of educated people, probably, the equipment of a high school teacher of Latin appears to be a fair understanding of the Latin tongue, that is, the ability to read with some freedom the most familiar Latin authors and to turn English sentences or paragraphs into something like classical Latin by process slow and perhaps a little uncertain—this along with such knowledge of Roman history, mythology, and private and public life as would be required in explaining the allusions met with in the study of the authors. Such an equipment is no slight matter and is to be gained ordinarily only by a careful course of study through high school and college. It is, however, the minimum equipment, and no really live teacher of Latin who chooses this work as his life vocation can content himself with it. Otherwise the task set for a Latin man in the schools might be easy.

The usual understanding of a Latin teacher's task might be illustrated by a remark of a very excellent teacher of science and one of the most famous of the scientific lecturers of the country, who said to me: "You Latin people have an easy time of it. You learn your subject once and that is the end of it, but we who deal with science must rectify our ideas and theories continually in the light of new discoveries". Such a statement is obviously too unfair to need refutation. On any such principle as that we should still find the site of old Troy on the height of Balidagh rather than at Hissarlik, we should still look for the Roman arx where the capitol was, and the comparatively recent discoveries at the altar of Dis and Proserpina in the Campus Martius would throw no light on the "Carmen Saeculare". Over against this scientist's statement should be placed the declaration of one of the best Latin men in university circles, who says that if he had known at the begin-

ning of his career the immensity of the field which a well equipped Latin man is expected to cover, he would have been deterred into choosing a less ambitious and less exacting subject.

Let us start with a knowledge of the authors commonly read in school and college and multiply this amount by (say) ten, to represent a moderately fair familiarity with Latin literature as a whole. An intelligent compassing of this amount and kind of work would give glimpses, but glimpses only, of most or all of the kindred subjects. It would bring the field of historical, and perhaps comparative, syntax into view, and would enable one to see how a life-time could be spent in fruitful inquiry with Delbrück and Hale into the facts and principles of syntax, the origin and development of constructions. It would show the indispensability of Greek to a man attempting to see the Roman language, literature, and life in their proper setting and historical sequence. Likewise it would show a need of the command of at least German, French, and Italian for facilitating the consultation in the original of the books and journals not translated into English, and for other reasons. Questions of textual readings would arise, the settlement of which would open up the whole subject of palæography and the visions of priceless MSS, ancient or mediæval, in the Vatican, in Florence, in Paris, in Berlin, in the British Museum. The incontrovertible evidence of inscriptions would often be invoked, and one needs but a glimpse of the Corpus or the Galleria Lapidaria of the Vatican to be convinced of the wide scope and rich returns of epigraphical study. Along with epigraphy goes the study of coins, which yield so much evidence on historical, biographical, topographical, political, and artistic questions. The location and description of the Servian Wall and the Cloaca Maxima, of the temple of Apollo and the house of Pompey, of the forum of Augustus and the gardens of Caesar, and the wonderful history of that most wonderful place in the ancient world, the forum Romanum, point to a branch of study as comprehensive as it is fascinating and recommend the acquiring of an acquaintance through Jordan and Richter and Middleton and Lanciani with the buildings and sites of the ancient city—and, so far as may be, of other localities. The step is easy and necessary from the study of the authors to the study of Roman private life and Roman political life and institutions. A Latin man wishes to know all this, but *hoc opus, hic labor est*. Marquardt, Guhl and Koner, Mommsen, Abbott—they are all necessary. Along with this sort of knowledge goes a mastery of Roman history and mythology, and the study of mythology entails the study of ancient art. Further, the Latin literature is the fountain of so much that is good and best in modern literature, and our own English literature, that it would ever seem a pity, while mastering the former, to neglect forming an acquaintance with what has flowed from it, as a stream from its source.

Much of the possible pleasure of reading Horace and Vergil is missed, if the reader can not command some share of the numerous imitations or adaptations or apt quotations from them in later literature—Dante, Milton, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, Swinburne, and the rest. And when it devolves on one to teach these ancient masterpieces, the acquaintance with the rôle which choice passages have played in later writing or speaking adds an extraordinary zest and interest; as, for example, it does to Hor Car III 29 55 to recall how Pitt in a fervid oratorical passage quoted as far as *virtute me involvo*, and, finding that rather too egotistic, had to amend on the instant Horace's exquisite lines, and to recall how our own Garfield in congress characterized slavery as *monstrum horrendum informe ingens, qui lumen ademptum*. It might be straining the point to say that when Uncle Jazon in "Alice of Old Vincennes" declared "Of all the livin' things on top of this yere globe the mos' onsartin, crinkety-crankety an' slippery thing is a young 'oman, etc", he was in effect translating Vergil's *varium et mutabile semper femina*. Still one might well be at a loss to say where in literature, from the most dignified and learned to the least dignified and least moulded by classical precedents, one might not glean matter of interest for use in teaching the ancient classics.

Thus it is natural for one starting on the seemingly simple task of acquiring a command of Latin, to be led by degrees to a study of the several languages mentioned,—Greek, German, French and Italian (perhaps Sanskrit),—historical and comparative syntax, palæography, epigraphy, numismatics, topography, Roman private life, history, mythology, and art, and in addition a large part of the literature of one's own tongue and other tongues, and a little reflection will show that the list is still incomplete. And yet any one of the departments of study indicated might easily engross the major part of one's attention and effort for an indefinite period.

It seems readily admissible that one who has familiarity with all those divisions of the general subject of Latin Study and with some part of the literature resultant therefrom approaches the maximum equipment for the high school work.

One means of preparation remains to be added—travel in the lands of the ancient Roman empire and study of the remains of that ancient civilization as they survive in the treasures of museum and art gallery, in arch, in tomb, in temple, in theatre, in ruined road or building, in the beliefs and customs and institutions of kindred peoples of our own day. The facilities for such study are much greater for Americans now than they were formerly by reason of the American Schools for Classical Study in both Athens and Rome. These schools in the comparatively short period of their existence have contributed incalculable aid toward the advancement of American scholarship, and the number of those who, returning from study there, take good positions in our colleges and universities is very significant. Such study is calculated to clarify and crystallize all former accumulations and to quicken and vitalize the whole body of laboriously gathered knowledge, as well as to inspire in one for the subject which he is to teach the enthusiasm so necessary to carry one over the rough places and to act as a welcome contagion on students. Of course it is not true that travel in Roman lands is a *sine qua non* for successful teaching. The great man who has long been recognized as the most learned Greek scholar and teacher in America had never

visited Greece till 1896. But the personal satisfaction that comes to one who takes, or even plans for, such travel and study is great.

But if such is to be the equipment of the high school man at the maximum, what superiority is left for the college or university professor? Theoretically none, to be sure. But the superior facilities for high-class work and investigation which a university offers by its libraries, by generous remuneration in the better professorships, and by other advantages, will always attract the best gifted and equipped men to those positions. The men who choose the high school work as their field, however, should aim at nothing short of the most thorough and comprehensive equipment—an equipment which will bring much personal satisfaction, an equipment which will greatly exalt and ennoble the high schools and inspire more young people who pass through these schools to look for a still higher education, an equipment which will enable high school men to prepare more largely than they do for their classes, whose needs they should well understand, the text books which the college men have so generally prepared up to date, and which all too frequently have been ill-adapted to the use of high school students.

This program of work is doubtless that of very many ambitious teachers of Greater New York, and their strenuous labors are a sufficient answer to that disgruntled citizen who in the Sunday issue of the "Brooklyn Eagle" of Mar 4 suggested that 'if the under-worked and over-paid teachers of this city were dissatisfied with their lot, they should resign and take up vocations in which they would be called upon really to exert themselves'. If said disgruntled citizen could invent some way of adding a few more working hours to the day or of fortifying the already severely taxed vitality of the high school teachers, he would do us all a great service, by providing a way for accomplishing some greater portion of that great work which confronts all classical teachers, and which daunts all but the strongest and most ambitious.

CHARLES E DIXON
Erasmus Hall H S

Announcement

In fulfillment of the promise made to the SCHOLARSHIP and LEAFLET PATRONS that we would remind them about two weeks before their subscriptions were due, announcement is herewith made that the statements for the first, second or third (as the case may be) of the five annual payments will be mailed on or about the first of November. Checks should be made payable to E W Harter, Treas, Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn.

It is a matter of regret to the editorial committee that neither our space nor our postage endowment permits us to give extended expression to our great appreciation of the many evidences of good will and kindly interest which continue to come in from all sections of the country from the friends of THE LEAFLET.

Those Class Record Cards

THE LATIN LEAFLET will not be able to fill any further orders for Class Record Cards until further notice as the supply has been exhausted.